

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

Meeting Date: March 15, 2006 - Marathon
Bulk Item: Yes ☐ No ☒

Division: BOCC
Department: DISTRICT FIVE

Staff Contact Person: Donna Hanson

AGENDA ITEM WORDING: Approval of a resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida, supporting efforts to protect Florida from offshore drilling and exploration.

ITEM BACKGROUND: This resolution was requested by DeVon Quirolo of Reef Relief.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOCC ACTION: _____

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT CHANGES: _____

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: _____

TOTAL COST: N/A

BUDGETED Yes ☐ No ☐

COST TO COUNTY: _____

SOURCE OF FUNDS: _____

REVENUE PRODUCING: Yes ☐ No ☐ **AMOUNT PER MONTH** _____ **Year** _____

APPROVED BY: County Atty ☒ OMB/Purchasing ☐ Risk Management ☐

DIVISION DIRECTOR APPROVAL: Murray E. Nelson
MAYOR PRO TEM MURRAY E. NELSON

DOCUMENTATION: Included ☒ Not Required ☐

DISPOSITION: _____ **AGENDA ITEM #** _____

RESOLUTION NO. _____ - 2006

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO PROTECT FLORIDA FROM
OFFSHORE DRILLING AND EXPLORATION**

WHEREAS, Florida's coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, beaches, fisheries, endangered species, tourism and quality of life depend upon clean ocean waters; the impacts of drilling muds and spills caused by offshore oil development can be carried by great distances by the Gulf Loop Current onto Florida's coasts; routine drilling muds release thousands of pounds of toxic chemicals into the environment, harm fish, corals and marine mammals, and place Florida at risk of a large or catastrophic spill; and

WHEREAS, Floridians and especially residents of the Florida Keys have been unified in their opposition to offshore oil drilling and exploration for many years; and

WHEREAS, the area south of 26 degrees North Latitude, approximately where Marco Island, Florida, lies, and all waters outside of Lease Sale 181, are under a Congressional moratorium for oil and natural gas exploration and development, thanks to years of past efforts; and

WHEREAS, the Congressional and a Presidential moratoria on offshore oil are now up for review, at a time when our coral reefs are endangered and need more, not less, protection to survive. The White House agreement with the state of Florida that currently protects most of Lease Sale 181, a hotly contested area in the Gulf, expires next year; and

WHEREAS, the effort to open Florida up to oil drilling began with the Interior Department removing Florida's jurisdiction and giving Louisiana authority over Lease Sale 181, via publication of a revised "Seaward Boundary Lines Extension" in the *Federal Register* in January of 2006, that occurred without public review or comment; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Interior Department released a new Five Year Plan for Oil and Gas Development and Exploration that undermines current protections for Florida's coral reefs; the current program runs through June 30, 2007, and the next Five Year Plan would put a 4 million + acre area on the auction block and proposes to rapidly make the west coast of Florida the most intensively-leased region of all currently-protected Outer Continental Shelf waters nationwide, also opening up the coast of Virginia and Alaska's fishery-rich Bristol Bay; and

WHEREAS, public comments on the proposed Five Year Plan can be submitted to the Minerals Management Service until April, 2006; and

WHEREAS, efforts are underway in Congress to fast track removal of its moratoria and the president could rescind his father's executive withdrawals that currently protect Florida from offshore oil; the chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee filed a bill that would authorize oil drilling in an area 100 miles south of the Florida Panhandle; Chairman Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) says he has the votes to open the Lease Sale 181 area in the Gulf of Mexico to oil and natural gas drilling; the first hearing is set for February 16th; the bill requires the Interior Department to begin offering leases in the "bulge" portion of the Lease Sale 181 area off the Florida coast within one year; and

WHEREAS, Florida Senators Mel Martinez (R) and Bill Nelson (D) have filed a bill which makes permanent the drilling moratorium in the eastern Gulf of Mexico, including most of Lease Sale 181; the Permanent Protection for Florida Act, numbered Senate Bill #2239, would keep drilling as far as 260 miles off Florida's west coast and 150 miles off the Panhandle and the east coast; the eastern Gulf is a military training zone and helps protect that zone by banning drilling within it and setting up a buffer alongside it for at least five years, but the measure would not prevent development on roughly 700,000 acres in the area's southwest portion; and

WHEREAS, as more threats to bring oil drilling closer to Florida's shores emerge in Washington, Florida Governor Jeb Bush's role is becoming increasingly pivotal; he can help craft a remedy acceptable to Florida's delegation and Congress as a whole; after years of being unified against drilling, Florida's congressional members seem more divided and indecisive on the issue than ever; the Governor supports the Nelson Martinez bill;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA:

1. **We support** the strongest possible protection for Florida and other fragile marine environments from the impacts of offshore oil and gas exploration and development, including additional efforts to expand exclusionary zones, extension of Presidential and Congressional moratoria, and defeat of legislation to open up our coast to offshore oil. We encourage the Interior Department Minerals Management Service, our Florida Congressmen and Florida Governor Jeb Bush to work in support of these goals. We support the Permanent Protection for Florida Act, numbered Senate Bill #2239 filed by Florida Senators Martinez and Nelson.
2. **We oppose** the Department of the Interior's new 5 Year Plan and the legislation filed by Senator Pete Domenici to allow oil drilling near Florida. We oppose any new offshore oil and gas leasing, exploration, drilling activity and seismic inventories affecting Florida's coast and support new Congressional moratoria against offshore oil drilling near Florida and other fragile coastal areas. We encourage extension of the Presidential Executive Order that bans leasing off America's east and west coasts and parts of Alaska from 2012 to 2020.
3. **We support** a permanent cancellation of the 90+ existing and active leases, some as close as 11 miles from our coast. Compensate the holders of those leases through rents due and royalty forgiveness for other current drilling activity. We support canceling any activity in Lease Sale 181 and establishment of a 150 mile buffer zone against drilling on Florida's east coast.

4. A copy of this resolution shall be sent to:

- a. *Renee Orr*, 5-Year Program Manager, Minerals Management Service (MS-4010), Room 3120, 381 Elden Street, Herndon, Virginia 20170
- b. *Honorable Senator Bill Nelson*, 716 Senate Hart Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
- c. *Honorable Senator Mel Martinez*, 317 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
- d. *Honorable Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen*, 2160 Rayburn Building, Washington, DC 20515
- e. *Governor Jeb Bush*, The Capitol, Tallahassee, Florida 32301.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida, at a regular meeting of said Board held on the 15th day of March, 2006.

Mayor McCoy
Mayor Pro Tem Nelson
Commissioner Neugent
Commissioner Rice
Commissioner Spehar

(SEAL)

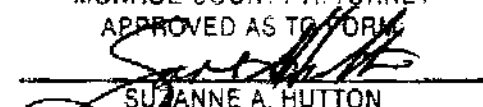
Attest: DANNY L. KOLHAGE, Clerk

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

By _____
Deputy Clerk

By _____
Mayor/Chairperson

MONROE COUNTY ATTORNEY
APPROVED AS TO FORM



SUZANNE A. HUTTON
ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
Date 2/22/06